



CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

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August 28, 2002

Chairman Getman
and Commissioners Downey, Knox and Swanson
Fair Political Practices Commission
428 J Street, Ste. 620
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: September 5, 2002 Commission Meeting
Agenda Item #15

Dear Chairman Getman and Commissioners Downey, Knox and Swanson:

It has just come to my attention that all State agencies have been asked to submit a plan to cut expenditures by 20% in fiscal year 2003-04. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend your September 5th meeting to participate in this dialogue; therefore I am submitting this letter and ask that you take it into consideration during your deliberations and decision-making process.

I am currently the City Clerk in Santa Cruz and have held this position for three years. Prior to that time I served as Deputy City Clerk for approximately seven years. As you are fully aware, City Clerks serve as filing officer for campaign statements, as well as Statements of Economic Interest for designated employees. In my capacity as Deputy City Clerk, I was responsible for both the 700 and 400 series filings, so I have about 10 years experience with the FPPC, its support and its forms. Now I understand that cuts to some of these programs will certainly impact City Clerks in our role as filing officers. Rather than trying to address each program and area under consideration, I would like to focus on just a few areas where cuts would greatly impact me in my capacity as filing officer.

Hotline

During my tenure in the City Clerks profession, I have had numerous occasions to use this service. I used this service when budgets were tight and it was virtually impossible to get answers to questions in a timely manner. As you know, the regulations are very complicated and can be intimidating to anyone who is not familiar with them. With your toll-free number and technical assistance advice line, I do not hesitate to refer any of my filers (candidates or designated employees) to your hotline number for advice. My experience with the hotline has been nothing but positive and has certainly made my duties much easier. I have confidence that when I call I will be able to actually talk to someone immediately and the advice they provide will be accurate. The quality of the advice, as well as being able to receive it in a timely fashion is very crucial.

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Workshops

In October 2001, I was fortunate enough to have a Filing Officer Workshop. The FPPC addressed both the 700 series and the 400 series, in that one day. We had about 60 clerks from this area participate. One of the most valuable parts of the workshops is the ability to ask questions, hear others questions, and participate in a dialog that results in clear understandable answers.


On August 10, the City of Santa Cruz again hosted an FPPC workshop for Candidates and Treasurers. More than 80 persons attended.

I believe that one of the primary responsibilities of the FPPC is training, and personal contact is more effective than manuals and supplements to manuals. I know that the amount of time and effort I put into the workshops is absolutely worth what the FPPC provides in training.

While I fully understand that you have been tasked with the responsibility of making these cuts and don't envy you in this process, I hope that you will take my comments into consideration and look for areas where cuts can be made that will not impact the services that you currently provide to City Clerks, as well as our filers. The services now provided by the FPPC are exemplary and you and your staff are to be commended for the improvements that they have made over the last few years. In order to preserve the integrity of the Political Reform Act it is imperative that these services remain intact as they are functioning today.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Leslie Cook, CMC
City Clerk